News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
February 6, 2007
2007/nr-017

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENING DIABETES CARE

44 New Diabetes Teams Are Part Of Early Intervention Strategy

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is improving access to diabetes care by adding 44 new education teams across the province to help support people with diabetes, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"People living with diabetes must carefully monitor and manage their health through a balance of lifestyle and medication," said Smitherman. "Diabetes education teams are part of our government's early intervention strategy to give patients the tools they need to better manage the disease so that they can avoid diabetes-related complications and stay healthy."

The $9.8 million announced today will allow 44 new diabetes education teams to help people improve their knowledge and skills to effectively manage their disease. The teams consist of a registered nurse and a registered dietitian, who work through Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres or a hospital.

Seventy-seven new diabetes teams have been created over the past year as part of part of the McGuinty government's $53 million diabetes strategy that focuses on diabetes education, early intervention and effective prevention of complications.

"Today's announcement reinforces the government's commitment to funding diabetes care that focuses on the essential management supports – diabetes education, early intervention and prevention of complications," said Michael Howlett, President and CEO, Canadian Diabetes Association. "For the more than 800,000 Ontarians living with diabetes, this announcement will make a real difference for them and their families."

Smitherman also announced that the government has added a new diabetes drug, Avandia, to the province's list of medicines covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. This was possible under the new conditional listing mechanism created under Bill 102, the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act, 2006. Avandia, used for the treatment of people with Type 2 diabetes, is one of 49 new drugs (including 23 new brand name products) added to the Ontario Drug Benefit formulary since October, 2006.

Diabetes is a chronic condition resulting from the body's inability to sufficiently produce and/or properly use insulin, which assists with the conversion of glucose into energy. Without insulin, glucose cannot be sufficiently absorbed from the bloodstream into the cells of the body. Chronic high levels of blood glucose due to diabetes can lead to long-term damage, dysfunction and failure of the kidneys, eyes, nerves, heart and blood vessels.

The government has also recently announced other initiatives to improve the quality of life for people living with diabetes, which included:

- Investing $9.65 million toward the purchase of insulin pumps and related supplies for children 18 and under who have Type 1 diabetes

- Adding the new drug, Actos, to the province's list of medicines covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program under Bill 102's new conditional listing mechanism.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

-30-

Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

A.G. Klei
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

Disponible en français.